

Message Text

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PASS TREASURY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: USSAEC, SA, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED JOINT COMMISSION PROJECT WITH CENTRAL
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

REF TREASURY OSAA 048

SUMMARY: EMBASSY SHARES TREASURY DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE
STATISTICS PROJECT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS, WE
CANNOT APPROVE THE PROJECT AS IT NOW STANDS. IN PARTICULAR,
TO MOVE A LARGE NUMBER OF ADVISORS INTO RIYADH RAPIDLY WOULD
NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OR OF SAUDI
ARABIA. END SUMMARY

1. OUR FIRST RESERVATION TO THE CURRENT PROPOSAL CONCERNS THE

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT NOW PLANNED. ARTICLE 3 OF THE DRAFT
PROJECT AGREEMENT GIVEN IN REFTEL LEAVES BLANK THE ITEM ON
NUMBER OF MAN-MONTHS OF ADVISORY SERVICES AND DOES NOT
STIPULATE THE TIME PERIOD FOR THOSE SERVICES. THE "OFFICIAL

COST ESTIMATE AND ACCEPTANCE" FORM DATED JUNE 13, 1975 AND
SIGNED BY MR. VINCENT B. BARABBA, STATES THAT
APPROXIMATELY 187 MAN-MONTHS OF STATISTICAL AND DATA
PROCESSING ADVISORY SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED IN RY 1976.

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2. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT ENGLISH SPEAKING PERSONNEL ON HAND TO PROVIDE FOR EVEN FIVE ADVISORS, NOT TO MENTION 15. THOSE WHO DO SPEAK ENGLISH ARE UNLIKELY TO BE WILLING TO SERVE AS EITHER TRANSLATORS OR COUNTERPARTS. THE FACT IS, THERE ARE NO MORE THAN TWO OR AT MOST THREE EVEN REMOTELY COMPETENT INDIVIDUALS IN THE CDS, AND THOSE INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE.

3. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH CDS PERSONNEL, WITH UNDP ADVISOR PERRERA, WITH CENSUS BUREAU ADVISOR WYNNE, AND WITH SAG PERSONNEL WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH CDS PERFORMANCE FORCES US TO CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY TO SEND EVEN 5 ADVISORS TO RIYADH AT THIS TIME. THE ADVISORS WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN AN OFFICE ADMINISTERED IN AN ARCHAIC AND CHAOTIC MANNER, WITHOUT ADEQUATE COUNTERPART ASSISTANCE. THEY WOULD SOON BE TRYING TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO THE CDS, WHILE HAVING NO TIME AT ALL LEFT FOR THE BASIC TASK OF TRAINING AND REORGANIZATION.

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT A MAXIMUM OF THREE ADVISORS BE SENT TO RIYADH. THESE WOULD BE THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, MR. WYNNE'S REPLACEMENT, AND A DEMOGRAPHER. THE PROJECT DIRECTOR CAN THEN OBSERVE FIRST HAND BOTH THE NEEDS OF THE CDS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, ITS ABILITY TO ABSORB ASSISTANCE. HE WILL THEN BE IN A POSITION TO IDENTIFY DESIGNATED COUNTERPARTS IN ADVANCE AND TO ENSURE THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL IS ADEQUATE TO THE TASK, AND WILL NOT HAVE TOO MANY OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES TO DETRACT FROM PERFORMING AS A COUNTERPART.

5. THIS STIPULATION AS TO TIMING OF ADVISORS SHOULD BE WRITTEN INTO THE AGREEMENT. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE ULTIMATE SCOPE OF THE EFFORT. AS PRIME USERS OF CDS MATERIAL, WE ARE, TO BE HONEST, DESPERATE FOR BETTER STATISTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA. FIFTEEN, OR EVEN FIVE, ADVISORS IS NOT THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE LIKELY TO BECOME DISCOURAGED BY THE TASK THEY FACE AND THE LACK OF RESPONSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEY CAN ELICIT. WE ARE QUITE CONFIDENT THAT THE PROJECT DIRECTOR, ONCE HE IS ON THE SCENE, CAN CONSTRUCT A REASONABLE PROJECT, WHICH WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CDS.

6. WE HAVE DISCUSSED EXACTLY THESE POINTS WITH MR. WYNNE, WHO, WITH HIS EXPERIENCE WITH CDS IN RIYADH, IS BEST ABLE TO EVALUATE THE INSTITUTION, AND ITS ABILITY TO ABSORB ASSISTANCE. HE AGREED COMPLETELY WITH THE

ABOVE ANALYSIS AND WE UNDERSTOOD HE WOULD PRESENT VERY SIMILAR VIEWS IN WASHINGTON.

7. EMBASSY ALSO HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT ARTICLE 7. WE HAVE ALREADY COMMENTED ON SAG ABILITY TO COMPLY WITH

PARA B). WE ALSO DOUBT THE WISDOM OF PARE E). SAUDIS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ANY MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING AND MAKING AVAILABLE SUITABLE HOUSING. WE RECOGNIZE THE SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AND HELPLESSNESS WHICH OSAA OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN RIYADH MUST FEEL WHEN FACING THE HOUSING PROBLEM. WE FEEL IT ALSO. NEVERTHELESS THE USG MUST FACE THE FACT THAT THE PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINDING SUITABLE HOUSING (AND WE EMPHASIZE SUITABLE) MUST FALL TO THE USREP/JECOR OFFICE. ANY ATTEMPT TO ELICIT HELP FROM THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE IS SIMPLY GOING TO COMPLICATE MATTERS AND PUT OFF PAINFUL BUT UNAVOIDABLE DECISIONS.

8. TO CONCLUDE, ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY IS JUST AS ANXIOUS TO SEE THIS PROJECT MOVE AHEAD AS OSAA, WE CANNOT APPROVE OF THE IMMEDIATE ASSIGNMENT OF A LARGE NUMBER

OF ADVISORS TO RIYADH. WE REQUEST THAT THE STIPULATION FOR AN ADVANCE GROUP OF THREE ADVISORS BE WRITTEN INTO THE PROJECT AGREEMENT, AND THAT THE U.S. PROJECT DIRECTOR BE GIVEN OPEN-ENDED AUTHORITY TO DECIDE WHEN AND IF THE PROJECT CAN BE EXPANDED FURTHER. ANY OTHER PROCEDURE WILL PRODUCE A PROJECT WHICH CANNOT HOPE FOR SUCCESS, AND WHOSE FAILURE WOULD DAMAGE OUR OVERALL EFFORT IN SAUDI ARABIA.
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